

FOCUS:

First Things

FIRST for the 21st Century

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Sometimes the first duty of
intelligent men is the
**restatement of the
obvious.**

George Orwell

A Day in the Life...

- English Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Science
- Math
- **ALL subjects: worksheets**

RESULT..?

- 25-30%

- 20—50%

- 7%

Solution...?

FOCUS on “first things”

- 1. LESS is MORE:** first things must be ceaselessly and repeatedly **clarified, practiced** and mastered **first**
- 2. FIRST THINGS:** What they are--and why they should be our highest priority.

SIMPLICITY: Less is MORE

"Foxes pursue many ends at the same time...**Hedgehogs** see what is essential, and **ignore the rest.**"

Good to Great p. 91

Jim Collins

Which most effective?

(re: test scores; college/career success)

- Laptops for all/Smartboards in every classroom
- Common, content-rich curriculum
- All commercial Math/literacy “programs”
- Basal readers
- Differentiated instruction
- Smaller classes
- Cold calling (and other “checks for understanding”)
- Various small/school-within-a-school “Academies”
- 90-120 minutes of purposeful reading & writing per day
- “Turnaround” strategies (new faculty; school design etc.)
- Cognitive/concept mapping; graphic representations

FIRST THINGS: Less is MORE

but...we keep **adding MORE/NEW**

methods, strategies

workshops, terms

programs, requirements, technology

classroom arrangements...

BEFORE implementing “first things”

M. Buckingham; J. Collins; Pfeffer & Sutton

A FAILURE IN LEADERSHIP

- “Every time the _____ goes to a conference, the teachers get worried, because they know he’s going to come back with something he wants to try.”

Tom Guskey

FOCUS:

- Borax—safety FIRST
- Hospital—life-saving solution
- Flowing Wells S.D./Orange Grove M.S.
(both in Tucson, Arizona)

II. "First Things": What & Why

REASONABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF:

1. Guaranteed Curriculum
2. Authentic, College-prep Literacy
3. Effective Lessons

**ONCE FULLY MASTERED, we may
judiciously pilot truly *evidence-based*
innovations**

"GUARANTEED & VIABLE CURRICULUM"

- **NUMBER ONE** factor (Marzano)
- **Coherent, content-rich curriculum**-- learned primarily through reading/writing (Hirsch; Willingham; Liben)
- "viable" curriculum creates more time for reading; writing; talking @ **content** = **gains in test scores, college preparation**
- Topics/texts taught in (approximately) the same sequence (by week; unit; month and grading period) around *mostly* common texts & writing assignments

US HISTORY

1st Quarter: American Revolution	WEEK	TOPIC	TEXT	QUESTIONS for close reading; discussion; writing, i.e. ASSESSMENT
Unit Question (optional) Were the colonists justified in seeking independence from Britain?	ONE	Taxation without representation	Textbook, Ch. 5: pp. 148--151	What were the best arguments for and against taxation without representation?
...same as above	ONE	British attitudes/treatment of the colonists	Proclamation of 1763 (which forbade Western settlement)	Was the Proclamation of 1763 fair or unfair to the colonists? Native Americans?

- Do America's schools now ensure that a coherent, "guaranteed," literacy-rich curriculum ***actually gets taught?***

GUARANTEED, CONTENT-RICH CURRICULUM? BRUTAL FACTS:

- ROSENHOLTZ: teachers provide a **“self-selected jumble”** of standards
- BERLINER/WALBERG: **wild variation** from teacher to teacher; no alignment with agreed-upon curriculum/standards
- GOODLAD; LITTLE; SIZER; ALLINGTON; CALKINS: “curricular chaos” in Eng./Lang. Arts
i.e. little/no authentic literacy

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

- **STILL** need to be reduced/clarified (Ainsworth; Schmoker&Graff)
- **NEVER PILOTED** (Conley/Ravitch)

SO: to prepare for **Common Core assessments...**

CURRICULUM/LITERACY

COHERENT SEQUENCE OF CORE CONTENT
learned via reading, writing & discussion—using
complex text/vocabulary--in these modes:

- draw inferences and conclusions
- analyze conflicting source documents
- solve complex problems with no obvious answer
- support **ARGUMENTS** with evidence

3-5 page papers in every course & “far more
books, articles & essays” in the curriculum

College Knowledge by David Conley

Common Core “Instructional Shifts”: Literacy Across the Curriculum

- **Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction**
- Reading, writing and speaking grounded in **evidence from text, both literary and informational**
- Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic language**

LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

GENERATE A GENEROUS, COMMON LIST OF:

- high-quality, complex fic./non-fic. texts: i.e. books, articles, poems, etc. (& teach essential vocabulary embedded in the texts)
- For all texts: generate questions/tasks to argue; infer; resolve conflicting views; solve open-ended problems
- Establish clear parameters for *number and length* of formal papers (e.g. 8 to 10 per year; each 3-5 pgs. in length)*

THEN CONTINUOUSLY PROVIDE LESSONS on HOW TO:

- Underline/annotate texts; cite text to support arguments etc.
- Discuss texts → write about texts

...hundreds of times per year, 2nd-12th grade

***PAPERS AS PRIMARY ELA ASSESSMENTS**

CURRICULUM in Content Areas

1. **Reduce**, then map essential *content* standards/topics
 - Divide by grading period (at @ 35 days per period)
2. **To begin:** select **common texts**, for each standard, for *only one grading period* (to read/discuss/write about), e.g.
 - Textbook: **specific pages** (not chapters) for topics
 - Books/longer documents
 - Hist./Sci. documents; news/magazine articles; data sets
3. **Generate** questions/tasks for texts (to argue; infer etc.)
4. **Continue** at team meetings to select texts/create questions
5. **Define parameters** for common writings
 - Number/length (e.g. 3-4 page paper per unit)

(**Identify topics for “Interactive Lecture”** where students frequently note-take; review notes; discuss)

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2. AUTHENTIC LITERACY

- Literacy is “the spine that holds everything together in all subject areas.”

Phillips & Wong, Gates Foundation

- “Adolescents entering the world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens and conduct their personal lives.”

Richard Vacca

AUTHENTIC LITERACY?

“Reading & Writing vs. ‘stuff’ ratio” (Allington)

- **“Literature based Arts and Crafts”** (Calkins):
dioramas; game boards; worksheets; posters; coats-of-arms; mobiles; movies; cutting, gluing; coloring; drawing; designing book jackets; skits; collages
- **Multiple choice curriculum:** short passages followed by questions about “external (or) internal conflict?”; “elements of literature”; “identify main idea” etc.

FAUX LITERACY

- Compare & contrast structure of texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style
- Analyze how the points of view of the characters and audience or reader (e.g. created through the use of dramatic irony) create effects like suspense or humor

8th grade Common Core--Reading

ALTERNATIVE?

“Three shifts” of ELA CC (i.e. unprecedented amounts of reading, writing & discussion grounded in evidence from complex fic/non-fic texts across disciplines)

CORE CONTENT learned via reading, writing & discussion to in these modes:

- draw inferences and conclusions
- analyze conflicting source documents
- solve complex problems with no obvious answer
- support **ARGUMENTS** with evidence

Multiple 3-5 page papers & “far more books, articles & essays” in the curriculum ***College Knowledge*** (D. Conley)

WRITING: HOW IMPORTANT?

- “If we could institute only **one change** to make students more **college ready**, it should be to increase the **amount and quality of writing*** students are expected to produce.”

David Conley
College Knowledge

LITERACY TEMPLATE: ACROSS THE CURRICULUM...

- Teach Vocabulary/Provide background of text (“anticipatory set”)
- Provide question or prompt
- “Model” critical reading/underlining/annotating for a few sentences/one or two paragraphs; then...
- Students underline/annotate a paragraph on their own (**guided practice**) during which...
- Teacher circulates to “**check for understanding,**” then...
 - reteaches or models again as needed
 - has students pair/share annotations frequently
- **Repeat modelling etc.** until all students are ready to underline/annotate text independently (“**independent practice**”)
- Conduct discussion of text (per the question/prompt):
 - in pairs/small group → as a class
- Write in response to the question or prompt: short/long; scored or not – --always with clear **learning objective** for writing assignment

SIMPLE, college-prep literacy

- Rafe Esquith
- Tempe Prep
- View Park H.S.
- Lynn Abeln
- Plessey vs. Ferguson; Gerrymandering

3. EFFECTIVE LESSONS...

Clarified

All teachers and administrators in a district or school building should be able to **describe effective teaching in a similar way.**

Robert Marzano

EFFECTIVE LESSONS/LECTURE*

100% ENGAGEMENT and...

- Clear learning objective/target ("Revise for word choice"; "Demonstrate knowledge of mean, median & mode")
- Anticipatory set/background/purpose/preview of lesson
- Teach; model/"**think aloud**"
- Guided practice--& lots of think/pair/share
- **Multiple** checks for understanding ("formative assessment")
- Independent practice/assessment

** Hunter; Popham; Marzano; Fisher & Frye; Lemov; Burns; Archer; Wiliam; Hattie; Saphier*

IMPACT of such lessons...?

- **“Largest gains ever recorded”** in the history of educational research (Popham)
- 3 consecutive years: **life-changing** gains—
 - 35-50 percentile points
- **DYLAN WILIAM:**
 - Extra 6-9 months per yr./**400%** faster learning
 - *20-30 x as effective as the most popular current initiatives* (like...?)
- **Ohio State; Sean Connors**

SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP in the Professional Learning Community

- “No institution can survive if it needs geniuses or supermen to manage it. It must be organized to get along under a leadership of average human beings.”

Peter Drucker

MONITOR 1. INSTRUCTION and 2. COMMON, COLLEGE-PREP CURRICULUM

LEADERS (administrators, dept. heads): conduct one or two focused, data-driven* **walk-throughs each month**; report schoolwide percentage exhibiting...

- Essential elements of an effective lesson
(e.g. “clear—*posted*-learning objective)
- Clear focus on **essential, guaranteed** curriculum
- College prep literacy: text-based discussion & writing

*September: 35% of lessons→ October: 80%

LEADERSHIP: Team Management

(D. Reeves; R. Marzano; R. DuFour)

QUARTERLY CURRICULUM REVIEW:

Leaders & Teams discuss...

- quarterly/unit assessments (success rate; areas of strength/weakness)
- scored papers/projects (weak/strong areas)

FIRST THINGS FIRST: suspend all other initiatives and...

- **Inform/persuade**—share impact of “first things”; *invite questions, input from staff*
- **Offer a *simple* refresher course** in effective instruction in every school, *every year*
- **Create curriculum:** *immediately*, for a few courses (see “CURRICULUM in CONTENT AREAS” slide)
- **Develop/refine Monitoring Systems:** e.g. walk-throughs and quarterly team reviews (see previous two slides)
- **Achieve small, measurable “wins” immediately** (“Win small; win early; win often”)

If necessary, assistance is available (schmoker@futureone.com)